
THE VISION:

That NWCP be a presbytery where there is both the expectation and opportunity for pastors to live fully into their ordination vows of serving Jesus Christ and his church with spiritual vitality of “energy, intelligence, imagination, and love.”

THE REALITY:

Christ’s ministry requires our whole mind, soul, body, and strength. Pastors understand and strive to be healthy and grow in their ministry. Yet the emotional, relational and spiritual stress of ministry can drain them of spiritual vitality and stagnate their spiritual formation.

“What do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul?” (Matthew 16:26).

COM wants to encourage pastors in stewardship of self, first and foremost, because you are a beloved child of God, a brother or sister in Christ, and your well-being matters to us. It is also the case that your well-being influences the church or organization you serve.

“When a local church loses its soul it begins to slip into mediocrity and is unable to give life.” (Gordon Cosby, founding pastor of Church of the Savior in Washington D.C.).

Nationwide studies and stories right here in NWC Presbytery observe that despite our knowledge, understanding and good intentions, pastors often find themselves spiritually and emotionally fatigued, and sometimes ill-equipped to lead their congregations through the adaptive challenges in the 21st century church or toward healthier patterns of relationship in their congregations. Three areas that can positively affect pastoral leadership are:

1. Rhythms and practices that nurture spiritual formation.
2. Relationships that encourage growth, spark renewal, and foster accountability.
3. Leadership development that enhances skills and increases effectiveness

THE EXPECTATIONS: “You can do it...We can help!”

To engage, equip, and encourage pastoral leaders to construct and maintain a habitat of relationships that encourage growth, spiritual formation, leadership development, and accountability. Toward that end we propose the Committee of Ministry communicate the following expectations with all NWCP pastors (“You can do it!”) and provide a corresponding array of opportunities to meet these expectations (“We can help!”):

1. Each pastor develop a spiritual rhythm or “rule” that fits them (recognizing there is no “one size fits all”).
2. Each pastor in a one-to-one relationship with a leadership coach, spiritual director or mentor.
3. Each pastor involved with a group of companions in ministry who meet regularly for sharing, prayer, accountability and encouragement.
4. Each pastor cultivate a habit of cultural and community analysis accompanied by engagement with spiritual leaders in the congregation to observe and assess their ever-changing mission field.

THE REALIZATION:

Sessions are central to the health, growth and well-being of the church community and are essential for supporting their ministers in living out these expectations. We recommend that COM also commission a task force to discern how “expectation and opportunity” for the spiritual formation and leadership development of active elders can be best communicated and implemented.